

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT OF THE NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL,
WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 15, HEADED "VIETNAM AND THE M.I.A.'S."

2. THE SECURITY COUNCIL'S DECISION TO POSTPONE CONSIDERA-
TION OF THE APPLICATION OF VIETNAM FOR UNITED NATIONS
MEMBERSHIP UNTIL AFTER THE AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
IS THE LEAST UNSATISFACTORY WAY OUT OF AN UNFORTUNATE
DILEMMA. A TWO-MONTH DELAY WILL GIVE THE FORD ADMINISTRA-
TION TIME TO THINK AGAIN ABOUT THE WISDOM OF TYING
VIETNAM'S ADMISSION TO THE QUESTION OF THE "M.I.A.'S"--
AT LEAST 800 MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES AND
OTHERS STILL COUNTED AS "MISSING IN ACTION" IN THE TOLL
OF THE VIETNAMESE WAR.

3. IT WILL ALSO PROVIDE TIME FOR A UNITED STATES REPLY TO
A VIETNAMESE NOTE OF AUG. 27--THE MOST RECENT OF SIX SUCH
UNCLASSIFIED

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EXCHANGES MADE PUBLIC MONDAY BY THE HANOI GOVERNMENT--WHICH
HAD SEEMED TO ADVANCE THE PROSPECTS FOR A RESUMPTION IN
PARIS OF BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS ABOUT THE M.I.A.'S AND
OTHER ISSUES. IT MAY BE, AS A WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN

SUGGESTS, THAT HANOI'S DECISION TO PUBLISH THE CONFIDENTIAL NOTES INDICATES A LACK OF SERIOUS INTENT ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS; BUT THAT THEORY MAY ENTIRELY MISREAD VIETNAM'S INTENTIONS, AND IT OUGHT TO BE PUT TO THE TEST.

4. IT IS OF COURSE UNCONSCIONABLE FOR HANOI TO CONTINUE TO WITHHOLD WHATEVER INFORMATION IT HAS ON THE MISSING AMERICANS--TWO YEARS AFTER THE END OF UNITED STATES INVOLVEMENT IN COMBAT OPERATIONS THERE. ALL AMERICANS AGREE ON THAT, WHATEVER THEIR DIFFERENCES ABOUT THE VIETNAMESE WAR OR ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF TRYING TO ESTABLISH NORMAL RELATIONS WITH THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM.

5. THIS ISSUE SHOULD SURELY HEAD ANY NEGOTIATING AGENDA. BUT AT THIS STAGE IT WILL SERVE NO PURPOSE TO REFUSE CONTACT WITH VIETNAM UNTIL ITS M.I.A. ACCOUNTING IS COMPLETE; AND INDEED, THE PUBLISHED NOTES TO HANOI BY SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT--WHILE EMPHASIZING THE HIGHEST PRIORITY FOR A COMPLETE ACCOUNTING--DO NOT MAKE IT A CONDITION FOR THE PARIS TALKS.

6. NOR SHOULD THE M.I.A. ISSUE BE USED--AS AMBASSADOR WILLIAM W. SCRANTON, REFLECTING PRESIDENT FORD, USED IT MONDAY--AS AN EXCUSE FOR KEEPING VIETNAM OUT OF THE UNITED NATIONS. EXPERIENCE HAS TAUGHT THAT MEMBERSHIP OF THE U.N. OUGHT TO BE OPEN TO ANY GENERALLY RECOGNIZED GOVERNMENT. HANOI'S BEHAVIOR ON THE M.I.A.'S IS OUTRAGEOUS; BUT THIS IS A REASON FOR BRINGING THAT REGIME INTO THE ONE WORLD FORUM WHERE PUBLIC OPINION AND DIPLOMATIC SUASION MAY HELP EFFECT A CHANGE IN POLICY.

7. IN FACT, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE M.I.A. ISSUE WAS THE MAIN REASON WHY THE PRESIDENT ORDERED A VETO OF VIETNAM'S BID. MR. FORD DOUBTLESS ACTED FOR THE SAME REASON THAT LED HIM TO DROP "DETENTE" FROM ADMINISTRATION RHETORIC EARLIER IN THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN: TO AVOID ANY UNCLASSIFIED

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SEMBLANCE OF SOFTNESS TOWARD A COMMUNIST REGIME--ESPECIALLY ONE THAT CONTINUES TO BEHAVE INEXCUSABLY ON A POIGNANT ISSUE. THE HASTE WITH WHICH JIMMY CARTER AGREED WITH THE VETO DECISION REFLECTS THE SAME POLITICAL COMPULSION.

8. NEGOTIATION REMAINS THE MOST PRACTICAL ROUTE TO WHATEVER INFORMATION HANOI HAS ON THE MISSING AMERICANS. VIETNAM'S ENTRY AT THE UNITED NATIONS COULD NOT HINDER THAT OBJECTIVE; IT MIGHT HELP. THESE POINTS WILL SURELY BECOME CLEARER FOR BOTH PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES ON THE MORNING OF NOV. 3. ROBINSON

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